

**John R. Allen**

General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)  
4303 Southwood Drive  
Alexandria, Virginia 22309  
[j.rutherford.allen@gmail.com](mailto:j.rutherford.allen@gmail.com)

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To Attorney Russell Carlberg, US Attorney's Office:

After getting to know Haroon Ullah over the past several years, I can confidently say that he is one of the most impressive young scholars and operations professionals that I have come across in my nearly fifty years in the field. In my roles serving as a General in the US Marine Corps, as commander of all NATO and US forces in Afghanistan, as a senior advisor to the Secretary of Defense on Middle East Peace and as the President's Special Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State, I have had the unique responsibility of defending our country and putting brave young men and women's lives on the line to protect our freedoms. In my view, Haroon is the rare individual who can effortlessly combine dynamic activism and leadership while also wielding impressive operational skills and a high proficiency in national security. Haroon's counterterrorism work in the field fighting Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and ISIL has already helped save American lives (as well as those of global citizens), and I believe Haroon will remain a uniquely central figure in defending this country and American lives against future terrorist and extremist threats.

Haroon has lengthy experience working at the highest levels of our government. He was on Secretary of State John Kerry's staff, as well as Secretary Rex Tillerson's, and was an integral part of the late Richard Holbrooke's Afghanistan-Pakistan (AF-PAK) Team, where he provided timely and insightful advice on newly emerging threats in the Middle East and South Asia. This involved developing new policy avenues for national security and democratization. Such experience and responsibilities have given Haroon a reputation as a seasoned strategist and premier policy practitioner. Haroon also put his life on the line to work at the US Embassy in Islamabad during a particularly difficult time period in the fight against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

I got to know Haroon even more closely through his counterterrorism work at the US State Department. At the time, I worked as the Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Rarely do young policy advocates make such a substantial difference; yet Haroon's performance at State put him in the top one percent of all policy experts and their ability to influence policy decisions to protect this country. His trailblazing work for senior principals garnered honors and has paved the way for innovative changes within the department. Moreover, Haroon assumed leadership in the office naturally, taking on new counterterrorism projects, building relationships with staff members and affiliates and was willing to do anything that moved forward the mission of our office.



Although he is relatively young, Haroon has already worked in different capacities at State and in an embassy setting. I admire his professionalism and extensive, real-world knowledge of social, political, religious and security matters – ranging from North Africa to the Black Sea. He currently serves as the Chief Strategy Officer at the US Agency for Global Media and is a “go-to” person on strategic communications, including fighting disinformation and anti-ISIL counter-messaging.

Several of Haroon’s project ideas have gained renown, as well. For example, a concept project of his was announced by President Obama in February 2015 at the Sawab Center in Abu Dhabi. Haroon’s concept was to establish a 24/7 social media messaging center to fight Al-Qaeda, ISIL and other extremist groups. He drafted the initial plan and worked with the inter-agency and the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to make this happen over the course of six months. It was an impressive accomplishment – to go from inception to a POTUS speech in less than six months. The President highlighted the work of the messaging center once again during his subsequent speech at the United Nations.

Over this period of time, I have grown fond of Haroon personally. He is reliable, a complete team player and frequently comes up with ideas and concepts outside of the box. I admire his professionalism and extensive, real-world knowledge of social, political, religious and security matters in America and abroad. Moreover, his leadership and social justice acumen belie his young years. In my experience, Haroon has had a strong sense of integrity and an ability to build relationships with key government and private sector partners across the board. On the personal side, Haroon exhibits great charm and classic good manners.

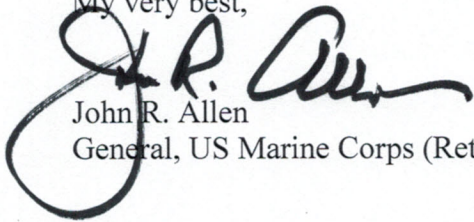
As a former Deputy Commander of the US Central Command, I have had to make key decisions on protecting American interests and security. Having spent my entire career in public service, I understand why the concept of trust is vital. I know there has been a breach of trust for Haroon to be in this situation. Under normal circumstances, it certainly makes sense to apply the traditional reprimand and penalties to Haroon. I believe in fairness and the rule of law. However, Haroon has never had any prior breach of trust in any realm while I have known him and has had nothing short of a stellar record. More importantly, I wholeheartedly believe that Haroon’s unique skill set in fighting counterterrorism and protecting this country at the highest levels is of critical importance to our country’s the future national security needs.

Haroon is a published author, whose work on countering terrorism, entitled *Digital World War*, published by Yale University Press, received immediate acclaim. Before his book was published, Haroon asked me for a “blurb” to be published on the back cover, reflecting my impression of the book. This is what I sent him: *"This extraordinarily important book could not be better timed, nor could it have a more credible author. Haroon has been, and remains, a key figure in disputing the cyber/information sphere, and waging digital conflict with those who would traffic in terror, disinformation, and hatred. He was one of the central figures in waging digital war against the so-called Islamic State. Marvelously researched, and splendidly written, Haroon Ullah, has done us all a great service in writing this book. It was my honor to serve with him in this struggle, one in which he will be recognized as a leader for years to come."*



Haroon's scholarship, diplomatic and policy experience in domestic and global affairs will continue to be of great importance to the United States. Haroon still has so much to give to this country and America will need his unique expertise going forward to protect against future terrorist and extremist threats. With his field experience, policy acumen and understanding of new technologies (digital/cyber), Haroon is one of a very select group of individuals who know how to defeat ISIL 3.0, which is already on the horizon. We need Haroon Ullah to help our country now and for many decades to come.

My very best,



John R. Allen  
General, US Marine Corps (Ret.)